2005 Weather Summary

January and February 2005 continued the pattern of balmy winters with a few cold snaps and snow events thrown in for good measure. By late February, snow depth was close to normal or even above normal over northern Minnesota, but the landscape was virtually free of snow over the south for much of January and February. A heavy late March snowstorm blanketed southern Minnesota with totals over a foot in many places. Heavy rains also brought added moisture to the southern half of the state, thanks to a batch of thunderstorms on March 30.

After the ground thawed across the state, ample rains fell over southwest and west central Minnesota in April, with totals varying widely across the rest of the state. April started warm but ended with a cold snap that continued into May. May 2005 was a chilly and gloomy month marked with the lowest solar radiation measurement at the University of Minnesota St. Paul Campus since records began in 1963. Monthly precipitation totals exceeded normal in many communities. Persistently wet weather hampered some agricultural fieldwork operations. May 2005 was the last month of the year that had a below normal average statewide temperature.

June 2005 brought frequent and abundant rainfall for all but the southeast part of the state and was the beginning of a very warm summer. Precipitation totals fell short of historical averages across much of Minnesota in July 2005. Combined with high evaporation rates due to warm July temperatures, the precipitation shortfall led to low stream flows and increased wildfire dangers in many communities. The exceptions were the far northwest and the southern two tiers of counties. August continued the warm conditions, but the rains returned somewhat in the west. Eastern Minnesota continued to be quite dry, especially in the northeast.

For the southern one-half of Minnesota, the growing season ended on a very wet note. September 2005 rainfall totals ranked above the 90th percentile for the majority of counties south of Duluth to the Moorhead line. September 2005 was the sixth warmest September average statewide temperature on record. The warm and rainy pattern continued into October over central and northern Minnesota, but the south had a chance to dry out. As Minnesota entered the winter season, soil moisture profiles and surface water systems were adequately to excessively recharged across most of the state.

The mild and wet pattern continued for most locations into November, with temperatures three to six degrees above normal. Significant rain for November fell across southern Minnesota late in the month. Cold temperatures early in December 2005 were more than counterbalanced by the warm weather late in the month. At the close of the month, frost was very shallow to nonexistent across southern Minnesota.

The accompanying maps show that virtually the entire state had a wetter than normal year, with the lone exception in the far southeast. Many places were much wetter than normal, especially over the western half of the state. Annual precipitation totals were from six to twelve inches higher than normal in many places.